



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

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May 10, 2012

(SN 146)

**WIA BULLETIN No. 05-12**

**TO:** WIA Partners

**SUBJECT:** Implementation of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program

**PURPOSE**

This bulletin provides guidance and instructions on the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), Section 122 of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011. This bulletin and the attached TEN 43-11 provide useful information to help staff prepare for the program's nationwide implementation on **May 15, 2012**.

**BACKGROUND**

**A. References.**

- (1) U.S. DOL ETA TEN No. 43-11, Subject: Overview of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), Section 211 of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, May 8, 2012 Attachment 1)
- (2) Workforce<sup>3</sup> One webinar in conjunction with U.S. DOL ETA Office of Workforce Investment and Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), topic: Overview of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), May 9, 2012
- (3) P.L. 112-56, Title II (VOW to Hire Heroes), November 21, 2011

**B. Justification for the VRAP.** On November 21, 2011, Public Law 112-56 was signed into law and authorized federal funds to support a retraining assistance program for eligible veterans through March 31, 2014. Title II of the statute,

VOW to Hire Heroes, provides tuition assistance and a monthly stipend for up to 12 months for eligible veterans to pursue vocational training and education relating to a high-demand occupation selected by the veteran. On May 15, 2012, the Department of Veteran Affairs will begin to accept applications online for the VRAP benefits. One-Stop Center staff is expected to assist veterans with the online application process and provide employment assistance following the completion of training. The program is a cooperative effort of the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) and the Department of Labors' Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS).

## **POLICY**

**Applicability.** All WDD Branch and Local Office staff should become familiar with the guidance and instructions contained in this bulletin and provide outreach for veterans to inform them of this opportunity and assist them as appropriate. Staff also should be prepared to inform their One-Stop partners about the implementation of VRAP and coordinate efforts with partners to ensure a seamless priority of services to veterans and avoids duplication of effort.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **A. General Concept**

- (1) Starting May 15, 2012, eligible veterans will be able to qualify for up to 12 months of financial assistance from the DVA as a full-time student at community colleges or private vocational schools. Training can only be for high-demand occupations as explained in the attached TEN.
- (2) Veterans can only apply online for VRAP benefits. They can apply without staff assistance or ask One-Stop Center for staff assistance.
- (3) Veterans will receive either a confirmation code acknowledging the online application was completed successfully or a notice that the application was disapproved. The confirmation code for a successful application is not to be construed as approval for VRAP benefits.
- (4) It is estimated it will take the DVA 20 days from the application date to render a decision; however, if demand is extremely heavy, it will take longer.
- (5) DVA pays the training costs directly to the training institution and deposits a monthly stipend to the veterans' bank account.
- (6) If application is disapproved, veteran can opt to appeal. Information on the appeal process is in paragraph c. of this bulletin.

- (7) Within 30 days of completing training or early termination of training, One-Stop staff will assist VRAP participants in securing employment. The DVA and U.S. DOL are currently developing procedures for this and information will be provided as soon as it is received.

**B. Eligibility.** To qualify for VRAP, a veteran must satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- (1) be at least 35 but not more than 60 years old, at the time of application;
- (2) be unemployed on the date of application;
- (3) not enrolled in any Federal or state job training program at any time during the previous 180-day period as of the application date;
- (4) in receipt of an other than dishonorable discharge from the last period of service in the armed forces;
- (5) not eligible for any other VA education benefit program;
- (6) not in receipt of VA compensation due to Individual Unemployability; and
- (7) submit an application no later than October 1, 2013 to qualify for the first round of benefits.

U.S. DOL will be responsible to verify criteria 1, 2, 3, and 7. DVA will verify other criteria.

**C. Appeal Process.** Veterans have an option to appeal a disapproved application to the U.S. DOL State of Hawaii, Director of Veteran Employment and Training (DVET) services. The State DVET has final decision authority on all VRAP application appeals. DVET contact information will be published separately.

**D. Data Recording.** Instructions for data entry into HireNet Hawaii will be provided after specific federal reporting requirements for VRAP are issued.

## **INQUIRIES**

Please contact WDD Program Specialist, Mr. Duke Olds, with your questions or concerns at e-mail [mark.n.olds@hawaii.gov](mailto:mark.n.olds@hawaii.gov) or 586-8819.

  
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DWIGHT TAKAMINE

<b>TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE</b>	<b>NO.</b> 43-11
	<b>DATE</b> May 8, 2012

**TO:** STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES  
STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCIES  
STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS  
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS  
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS  
STATE LABOR COMMISSIONERS  
ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS  
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT SECTION 166 INDIAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN GRANTEEES  
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT SECTION 167 MIGRANT AND NATIONAL FARMWORKER JOBS PROGRAM GRANTEEES  
EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS WOMEN'S BUREAU REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS  
SUB-RECIPIENTS OF DEPARTMENT OF LABOR FUNDS

**FROM:** JANE OATES /s/  
Assistant Secretary  
Employment and Training Administration

ISMAEL ORTIZ, JR. /s/  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
Veterans' Employment and Training Service

**SUBJECT:** Overview of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), section 211 of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011

**1. Purpose.** To provide the public workforce system with an overview of VRAP, the role of the system in implementing the program, and inform the system that additional information will be made available as procedures and protocols for implementing the program are finalized.

**2. References.**

- VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011, (Public Law (Pub. L.) 112-56) Section 211;
- Veterans' Program Letter (VPL) 07-12, *Overview of the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), section 211 of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011.*

3. **Background.** On November 21, 2011, President Obama signed the VOW to Hire Heroes Act of 2011 into law which established the VRAP in title II of Pub. L. 112-56. The VRAP directs the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in cooperation with the Department of Labor (DOL), to pay for up to 12 months of a retraining assistance in a "high demand" occupation for unemployed eligible veterans between the ages of 35 and 60 as determined by DOL and VA.

The program may enroll up to 45,000 veterans in Fiscal Year 2012, beginning July 1, 2012, and up to 54,000 veterans from October 1, 2012 through October 1, 2013, with training concluding by March 31, 2014.

4. **Eligibility Criteria.** In order to qualify for retraining assistance, a veteran must satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- be at least 35 but not more than 60 years old, at the time of application;
- be unemployed on the date of application;
- not enrolled in any Federal or state job training program at any time during the previous 180-day period as of the application date;
- in receipt of an other than dishonorable discharge from the last period of service in the armed forces;
- not eligible for any other VA education benefit program;
- not in receipt of VA compensation due to Individual Unemployability; and
- submit an application no later than October 1, 2013.

5. **Application Process.** Interested veterans will be able to apply for the program through a joint VA/DOL electronic application that will be accessed from multiple web sites (including DOL's web site) that are linked to the VOW to Hire Heroes Act web site (<http://benefits.va.gov/vow>), which will be available beginning on May 15, 2012, to accept applications. DOL and VA are responsible for determining different sections of the eligibility criteria. DOL is responsible for determining age, whether the applicant is unemployed on the date of application, enrollment status in a Federal or state job training program within the previous 180-days, and that the application was submitted no later than October 1, 2013. VA is responsible for determining each applicant's discharge status, eligibility for other VA education benefits, and if the applicant is in receipt of VA compensation due to Individual Unemployability (for more information on Individual Unemployability, <http://www.vba.va.gov/VBA/benefits/factsheets/serviceconnected/IU.asp>).

In order to apply for VRAP, the veteran will take the following steps in the application process:

- a) The veteran may be referred to the on-line VRAP application from any of the following sources: a referral from One-Stop Career Center or other program office staff, a visit to the DOL website, a visit to the VA website or through other outreach communications;
- b) The veteran signs-in to his or her VA Veterans Online Application (VONAPP) or registers for a new account;

- c) The veteran will begin the application process on a screen with the following content, where he or she will provide responses, and attest to their accuracy, that DOL will use to determine each applicant's VRAP eligibility (OMB Control Number 1205-0491):

- Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- First Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_
- Date of Birth: MM/DD/YYYY
- Are you unemployed? \_\_\_\_\_ y/n;  
*People who are (1) jobless, (2) looking for jobs, and (3) available for work are unemployed (all three criteria must be met in order to be unemployed).*
- Have you been enrolled in a Federal or state job-training program in the past 180 days? \_\_\_\_\_ y/n;  
*Examples include any training funded by: a local career center, a One-Stop Career Center, or any state or local employment office.*

The information provided on this application will be used for the purposes of determining your eligibility to receive retraining assistance benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The information may be audited for accuracy. By checking the box below, you agree to the following statement:

☐ "I swear or affirm that the statements on this application, to the best of my knowledge, are true and correct. I understand that by submitting this application, I am making a statement to the government for the purposes of obtaining federal benefits. Section 1001 of Title 18 of the U.S. Code makes it a criminal offense for any person to knowingly and willfully make false or fraudulent statements to any department or agency of the United States Government. Additionally, I understand that if the information I have provided on this application is found to be false or incorrect, I will be immediately unable to receive benefits under this program, and I may be required to reimburse the Government for any benefits I have already received."

- d) After completing this initial step in the application process, the applicant will be notified of their partial eligibility based on DOL's determination. If determined partially eligible, the applicant will continue the VA's portion of the application. If determined ineligible, the applicant will receive a system generated notification (on the screen) which will indicate why the veteran is ineligible, how to appeal the decision, and the availability of employment services offered through the workforce system; and
- e) The VA will determine the applicant's further eligibility by ensuring the applicant: received an other than dishonorable discharge from the last period of service in the armed forces; is not eligible for any other VA education benefit program; and, is not in receipt of VA compensation due to an Individual Unemployability rating. The veteran will also indicate the "high demand" occupation they are applying to the program to pursue. A list of the "high demand" occupations, as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, will be available in a drop down list in the application. If the veteran is determined eligible based on the information submitted, she/he will receive a system generated letter

informing them of the next steps to utilize the benefit. If determined ineligible the applicant will receive a system generated notification letter in the mail, which provides information on how to appeal the decision.

After being determined eligible by DOL and VA, the veteran will be able to receive a VRAP stipend from VA for enrolling full time in the community college or technical school offering the training in a "high demand" occupation. Once approved, the training can begin on or after July 1, 2012. The VA and DOL are currently working in close coordination on the application process, outreach efforts, and a process for reporting program outcomes.

**6. Implementation Role.** The training benefit is being administered by the VA. DOL and the public workforce system will be responsible for providing outreach to potentially eligible veterans who seek services at a One-Stop Career Center or other program office. One-Stop Career Center staff, Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists, and Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERs) should be assisting in this effort by identifying potentially eligible applicants who may meet the criteria and be interested in retraining in a new "high demand" occupation. The VA will be able to approve up to 45,000 applications for VRAP training from July 1 through September 30, 2012, and up to 54,000 additional veterans can be enrolled beginning in FY 2013.

As the program start date approaches, DOL will host a webinar and provide additional guidance on how to recruit and assist veterans interested in applying for the program, including a toolkit for use by One-Stop Career Center staff and other technical assistance to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the program.

The VRAP requires the public workforce system to contact veterans within thirty (30) days following completion or termination of the program in order to provide employment services. A process is being discussed with VA on how DOL will be informed about veterans' completion or termination status. DOL will then develop a system to disseminate the information, as well as contact information for each enrolled veteran, to the state and local level. DVOP specialists, LVERs, and other One-Stop staff will be responsible for offering employment services to each veteran. DOL will be providing additional guidance to the public workforce system on how to receive the information, contact each of the veterans, and report outcomes exclusively for this group of veterans.

**7. Action Requested.** State Workforce Agency, Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) field staff, DVOP and LVER staff, local One-Stop Career Center staff, and other program office staff should familiarize themselves with the guidance provided and the attached VOW Fact Sheet. Additional information about the VRAP will be issued as the VA and DOL complete implementation processes.

**8. Inquiries.** Questions should be directed to your Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Regional Office or VETS Regional Office through VETS' Director for Veterans' Employment and Training in the State.

**9. Attachment(s).** VOW Factsheet



## THE VOW TO HIRE HEROES ACT OF 2011

### NEW BENEFITS FOR UNEMPLOYED VETERANS

#### VETERANS MAY QUALIFY FOR ADDITIONAL EDUCATION BENEFITS.

The Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) offers 12 months of retraining assistance to Veterans who are:

- Unemployed
- At least 35 but no more than 60 years old
- Have an other than dishonorable discharge
- Not eligible for any other VA education benefit program (e.g., the Post 9/11 GI Bill, Montgomery GI Bill, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment)
- Not in receipt of VA compensation due to Individual Unemployability (IU)
- Not enrolled in a federal or state job training program
- Enrolled in a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school

The program is limited to **45,000 participants** from July 1, 2012 through September 30, 2012, and to **54,000 participants** from October 1, 2012, through March 31, 2014. Participants may receive up to 12 months of assistance at the full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill–Active Duty program (currently **\$1,473 per month**). The program must lead to an Associate Degree, Non-College Degree, or a Certification, and train the Veteran for a high demand occupation.

Visit [www.gibill.va.gov/VRAP](http://www.gibill.va.gov/VRAP) to learn more and read frequently asked questions about VRAP. More details about VRAP, including information on how to apply, will be published at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov) as they become available.

#### VETERANS WITH A SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY MAY QUALIFY FOR ADDITIONAL VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Veterans who previously completed a VA vocational rehabilitation program and have used the initial 26 weeks of unemployment benefits may qualify for an additional 12 months of VA vocational rehabilitation benefits.

- You must have previously completed a VA Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment program and been considered “rehabilitated” by VA.
- You must apply within six months of using up your initial 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. You may still qualify for extended or emergency unemployment benefits.
- You can apply now, but cannot start any education or training until June 1, 2012 and you must apply to VA by March 31, 2014.

VA may offer incentive payments to encourage employers to hire and train program participants.

- VA may be able to reimburse an employer up to one-half your annual salary for 6 months or longer
- This can provide you with a competitive advantage with employers
- You must apply and qualify for VA vocational rehabilitation benefits prior to being hired

To apply or learn more information about vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits please call 1-800-827-1000, visit the [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) and fill out an online application (VONAPP), or Complete VA Form 28-1900, *Disabled Veterans Application for Vocational Rehabilitation*, and submit it to the nearest VA Regional Office.

Please continue to check [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for changes and updates to the VOW to Hire Hero Act programs and benefits. Last updated on 02/27/2012.



U.S. Department  
of Labor



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